

Our Identity In Christ  
Bob DuPar  
Ephesians / Ephesians 1:1-23

## Ephesians 1:1-23

Community Bible Church  
Pastor Bob DuPar  
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### Initial Insights

Identity - “The Bible says that our real problem is that every one of us is building our identity on something besides Jesus.”

Tim Keller

“My identity does not begin when I begin to understand myself. There is something previous to what I think about myself, and it is what God thinks of me.”

Eugene Peterson

Since God created us, only He can reveal our true identity and purpose!

## **Ancient Ephesus**

Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this letter. He wrote it to the church at Ephesus sometime between AD 60-62. This makes it one of the earliest NT manuscripts (we believe that James was the first - AD 50). This letter, besides going to the church at Ephesus, probably got circulated to a number of churches in Asia Minor.

## **Purpose**

No particular problem is raised in the book, but on Paul's return from his 3rd missionary journey (a.d. 57), he told the Ephesian elders to beware of false teachers who would teach heresy (Acts 20:29-30).

Revelation 2:2 informs us that the Ephesian

church succeeded in keeping out the false teachers and teaching, but had failed to keep Christ as their first love. (Rev. 2:4)

Ephesus was one of the largest and most impressive cities in the ancient world, a political, religious, and commercial center in Asia Minor. It had a population of more than 250,000 in the 1st century BC, which also made it the second largest city in the world. It was associated with the ministries of Paul, Timothy, and the Apostle John, the city played a significant role in the spread of early Christianity. Paul went to Ephesus in AD 52 on his 3rd missionary journey, and he stayed there for 2 years and 3 months. Ephesus and its inhabitants are mentioned more than 20 times in the NT. Ephesus was an important seaport, conveniently situated between the Maeander River to the south and the

Hermus River to the north, its excellent access helped it to flourish as a commercial center.

Most Ephesians worshiped the Greek goddess of fertility Artemis (The Romans called her Diana). There was a temple dedicated to her in Ephesus that was roughly the size of a football field; and it was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world! The grandeur of the ancient city is evident in the remains uncovered by archaeologists, including a **theater** that sat 24,000, gymnasiums/public baths, a **library**, as well as several **streets** and private residences.

## **Modern Day Ephesus**

Today, the Turkish town of Seljuk occupies the site of ancient Ephesus.

### **Ephesians 1:1–23** (NASB95)

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the

saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

<sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

<sup>8</sup> which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

<sup>9</sup> He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

<sup>10</sup> with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

<sup>11</sup> also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

<sup>12</sup> to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ

would be to the praise of His glory.

<sup>13</sup> In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

<sup>14</sup> who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

<sup>15</sup> For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

<sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;

<sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

<sup>18</sup> *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

<sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

<sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

<sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and

gave Him as head over all things to the church,  
<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

## **Our Identity** (9 Fold)

Notice that our identity is all about what God has done for us, and not about anything that we have done! Also, nobody can change our identity in Christ! It's inalterable!

### **Faithful**

Ephesians 1:1 (NASB95)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are faithful in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 1:1 (SBLGNT)

πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· “**Believing in!**”

Essentially this word ‘faithful’ means ‘exercising faith/belief.’

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

### **Blessed with every spiritual blessing**

Ephesians 1:3 (NASB95)

Blessed... with every spiritual blessing in  
the heavenly *places* in Christ

Ephesians 1:3 (SBLGNT)

Εὐλογητὸς **Eulogetos**

What Paul stresses here is that the blessing God gives us in Christ is *spiritual*. A contrast is probably intended with Old Testament days when God's promised blessings were largely material.

**John Stott**

The distinctive blessings of the new covenant are spiritual, not material; for example, God's law written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, a personal knowledge of God, and the forgiveness of our sins.

**John Stott**

**Romans 4:7 NLT**

“Oh, what joy for those

whose disobedience is forgiven,

whose sins are put out of sight.



Revelation 19:9 (NLT)

And the angel said to me, “Write this:  
Blessed are those who are invited to the  
wedding feast of the Lamb.”

**Revelation 20:6 NLT**

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first  
resurrection. For them the second death holds no power,  
but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign  
with him a thousand years.

## Chosen

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB95)

Just as He chose us in Him before the  
foundation of the world, that we would be  
holy and blameless before Him. In love

Ephesians 1:4 (SBLGNT)

ἐξελέξατο Eklegomai “To call  
out”

\*Bill Murray in Groundhog Day

\*Children collecting sea shells & sea glass!

**2 Thessalonians 2:13 NLT**

As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear  
brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always

thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth.

James 2:5 (NLT)

Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him?

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

...You are a chosen people, a royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

2 Peter 1:10 (NASB95)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.

## Holy

Holy: “Set apart for special/sacred use.”

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB95)

...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

Ephesians 2:20–21 (NLT)

Together, we are God’s house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself.

<sup>21</sup> We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

Colossians 1:21–22 (NLT)

...You were once far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.

<sup>22</sup> Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical

body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.

2 Timothy 1:9 (NLT)

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 2:5 (NLT)

And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

Blameless

VS.

4

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless (without fault) in his eyes.

The word is used of a sacrifice that is without spot or blemish!

**Mercy Me** - “The Cross has made you flawless!”

Jude 24 (NASB95)

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy!

## Adopted Sons

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

Ephesians 1:5 (NASB95)

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will!

Ephesians 1:5 (SBLGNT)

υἰοθεσίαν - **huiothesia** “to appoint as sons!”  
“Adoption” in the Roman world of the first century AD described a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate. This was in no way inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature, but rather might enjoy the father’s affection more fully and reproduce the father’s character more worthily.

**John Stott**

**Redeemed**

Redeemed: “Freedom through the payment of a ransom.”

\*CBC - buying this property in 2015!

Ephesians 1:7 (NASB95) In Him we have redemption through His blood...

Galatians 4:5 (NLT)

God sent Jesus to buy freedom (redemption) for us who were slaves to the law, so that He could adopt us as His very own sons.

Romans 3:24 (NASB95)

Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 9:12 (NLT)

With His own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—He entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever!

Forgiven

Forgive: “*To let go, release from a debt.*”

Ephesians 1:7 (NASB95)

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace

You may not believe that you're forgiven because you don't feel forgiven. But what then, are you trusting—your feelings or the truth of God?"

**R. C. Sproul**

Instead of the Temple and its symbolism, Paul is saying, Jesus Himself is now *the place where*, and also *the means by which*, the God of Israel has met with His people and forgiven their sins.

**N. T. Wright**

**Sealed**

Ephesians 1:13 (NASB95)

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were



sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of  
promise

Sealed: Signet Ring

## How Has God Brought All Of This About?

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB95)

He chose us in Him before the foundation of  
the world, that we would be holy and  
blameless before Him. In love

Ephesians 1:5 (NASB95)

He predestined us to adoption as sons  
through Jesus Christ to Himself, according  
to the kind intention of His will.

This phrase “*His kind intention*” is repeated  
in verse 9!

Ephesians 1:7 (NASB95)

In Him we have redemption through His  
blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,  
according to the riches of His grace.

Ephesians 1:8 (NASB95)

He lavished (all this) on us in all wisdom

**and insight!**

Ephesians 1:13 (NASB95)

In Christ, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise!

**Why Has All Of This Happened? Why Have We Been Blessed In This Way?**

Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14

Ephesians 1:6 (NASB95)

To the praise of His glory!

This is repeated in verse 12 & 14!

What does the Apostle Paul pray for in verses 15-23?

Ephesians 1:17 (NASB95)

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the

## **knowledge of Him!**

Knowledge of God comes before any particular blessing that we may desire from Him. The goal of all our worship should not be to have a particular experience; it should not be to petition certain blessings; it should be to know God Himself—the Giver not the gift, the source and the fount of every blessing.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Ephesians 1:18 (NASB95)

**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened!**

The inability to see and understand spiritual things is not the fault of the intelligence but of the heart. The eyes of the heart must be opened by the Spirit of God.

Warren W. Wiersbe

The best teaching in the world is useless

unless the Holy Spirit takes hold of it and applies it and opens our understanding to it, and gives it a deep lodging place in heart.

*The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, 110

**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

**Enlighten** = Photizo - “To bring to light!”

Ephesians 1:18 (NASB95)

...That you might know what is **the hope of His calling!**

My only hope is that I shall be one day clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

Ephesians 1:18 (NASB95)

...And the riches of **the glory of His inheritance** in the saints! This is repeated several times!

Ephesians 1:19 (NASB95)

**And the surpassing greatness of His**

**power** toward us who believe!

\*Similar to **Romans 8:28!**

## **Closing Comments**

A woman shared her lifelong struggle of being an unwanted child. Her mother was a prostitute, and she was the accidental byproduct of her mother's occupation. Although her life's pilgrimage had brought her to faith in Christ, blessed her with a deeply Christian husband and beautiful children, and given her a life of love and stability, she was obsessed with the need to find out who her father was. This obsession was affecting her marriage, her family and her life.

She told how one day she was standing at the kitchen sink, washing the dishes, with tears of anguish and frustration running

down her face into the dishwater. In her agony, she cried out, “Oh, God, who is my father?” Then, she said, she heard a voice saying to her, “I am your Father.”

The voice was so real she turned to see who had come into the kitchen, but there was no one there. Again the voice came, “I am your Father, and I have always been your Father.” In that moment she knew the profound reality that Paul is speaking of. She came to know that deeper than the accident of her conception was the eternal purpose of a loving God, who had spoken her forth into being before the foundation of the world.